

However, before examining whether these four phenomena are of the same level or of different levels there will be brief explanations of the arising of a sense consciousness and of the four phenomena.

These explanations (which are not found in the **General Meaning**) are based on the example of an eye consciousness in the continuum of a person who has attained any of the four concentrations.

THE ARISING OF A SENSE CONSCIOUSNESS

In general, a sense consciousness manifests in dependence on three conditions:

- i. The observed object condition
- ii. The uncommon empowering condition
- iii. The immediately preceding condition

i. The observed object condition

The observed object condition refers to the object which the sense consciousness observes or perceives. In the case of an eye consciousness, the observed object condition is visual form (shape or colour). Therefore, an eye consciousness can only arise when there is visual form that is in the sphere of vision of the person in whose continuum the eye consciousness arises.

ii. The uncommon empowering condition

The uncommon empowering condition of a sense consciousness refers to a type of clear internal physical form that empowers the consciousness in the sense that it enables it to perceive its particular object (eye consciousness: shape or colour, ear consciousness: sound, nose consciousness: smell, tongue consciousness: taste, body consciousness: tactile object)

In the case of an eye consciousness, its uncommon empowering condition does not refer to the actual eye organ but to a type of clear internal physical form (located at the eye organ) that enables it to perceive visual forms as opposed to sounds, tastes, smells, and tangible objects.

iii. The immediately preceding condition

The immediately preceding condition refers to a moment of consciousness in the continuum of the person that immediately precedes his sense consciousness and that makes the sense consciousness an experiencing entity. In the case of an eye consciousness, the immediately preceding condition can be any of the preceding six consciousnesses (the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness)

THE FOUR PHENOMENA

As mentioned above, the four phenomena are:

- (1) The physical basis that observes an object,
- (2) The sense power
- (3) The awareness
- (4) The object of the awareness

(1) The physical basis that observes an object

The physical basis that observes an object refers to the *person* that observes an object. In this case, it refers to the person who has attained any of the four concentrations and in whose continuum an eye consciousness arises.

If that person has attained only the first concentration he is either a person of the Desire Realm or of the First Concentration Abode (the first Form Realm). If he has attained the second concentration, he is either a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, or the Second Concentration Abode. If he has attained the third concentration, he is either a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, the Second Concentration, or the Third Concentration Abode. And if he has attained the fourth concentration he is either a person of the Desire Realm or of any of the Four Concentration Abodes.

With the exception of Arya Bodhisattvas who can control in what realm they are reborn, all other sentient beings take rebirth dependent on what concentration they have attained.

Therefore, a person who has not attained any concentration can only be reborn in the Desire Realm. A person who has attained only the first concentration (but not the second concentration) in this life is necessarily reborn in the First Concentration Abode in his next life (unless the concentration degenerates before he dies). Hence the person who has attained only the first concentration is either a person of the Desire Realm or a person of the First Concentration Abode because in this life he is a person of the Desire Realm and in his next life he is reborn in the First Concentration Abode.

If someone has attained the second concentration (but not the third concentration), he is either a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, or the Second Concentration Abode. The reason for this is that he can newly cultivate the second concentration either as a person of the Desire Realm or a person of the first concentration. Then when he dies (and if the second concentration has not degenerated) he is necessarily reborn in the Second Concentration Abode.

Similarly, if someone has attained the third concentration (but not the fourth concentration), he is either a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, Second Concentration, or the Third Concentration Abode because he can *newly* attain the third concentration as a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, or the Second Concentration, and when he dies (without the third concentration having degenerated) he is necessarily reborn in the Third Concentration Abode.

Lastly, if a person has attained the fourth concentration (but not the first absorption of the four formless absorptions), he is either a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, Second Concentration, Third Concentration, or the Fourth Concentration Abode. The reason for this is that he can *newly* attain the fourth concentration as a person of the Desire Realm, the First Concentration, the Second Concentration, or the Third Concentration Abode, and when he dies (without the third concentration having degenerated) he is necessarily reborn in the Fourth Concentration Abode.

Please note that even though a meditator who has attained, for instance, the second concentration must have also attained the first concentration, he is not reborn in the Desire Realm or the First Concentration Abode because he has attained the higher and superior second concentration. Similarly, even though a meditator who has attained the third concentration must have also attained the first and the second concentrations, he is not reborn in the Desire Realm, the First Concentration or the Second Concentration Abode because he has attained the higher and superior third concentration. The same applies to the other concentrations (and the four formless absorptions).

Furthermore, a concentration (or formless absorption) can only be attained by a person in any of the lower levels. Therefore, the first concentration can only be attained newly by a meditator in the Desire Realm and not by a person in the First Concentration Abode. The second concentration can only be attained newly by a meditator in the Desire Realm or the First Concentration Abode but not by someone in the Second Concentration Abode. The same applies to the other concentrations (and the four formless absorptions).

The reason for this will be explained later.

(2) The sense power

The sense power refers to the uncommon empowering conditions. Here in the case of an eye consciousness that manifests in the continuum of a person who has attained any of the four concentrations, it refers to a type of clear internal physical form that enables the eye consciousness to perceive visual forms as opposed to sounds, smells, and so forth.

Before a person cultivates any of the concentrations, the only sense powers he possesses are the sense powers that pertain to the Desire Realm. However, when he newly attains the first concentration, not only does he possess sense powers that pertain to the Desire Realm, he also acquires sense powers that pertain to the First Concentration. Therefore, his eye consciousness can arise in dependence on an eye sense power that pertains to the Desire Realm or a sense power that pertains to the First Concentration Abode.

However, if he has not attained the second concentration and above, he does not possess any sense powers that pertain to the Second Concentration, the Third Concentration, the Fourth Concentration, or to any of the Formless Realms.

